(e) the measures taken to check the exploitation of farmers by illegal money lenders and traders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) The Credit Flow from Cooperative Credit Institutions to agriculture and allied activities was Rs. 26959 crores during 2003-04 as against Rs. 23636 crores during 2002-03. District Central Cooperative Banks in Vidarbha Region has disbursed agriculture loan to the tune of Rs. 448.67 crores during 2003-04 as against Rs. 387.98 crores during 2002-03. In addition to Cooperative Credit Institutions, Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks also disbursed agriculture credit in the country including Vidarbha Region.

(c) to (e) As per All India Rural Debt and Investment Survey (1991), 34% of Rural Credit is dispensed by non-institutional sources. It is also estimated that the share of credit disbursed by money lenders to agriculture was 17.5%. Several measures have been taken to increase the credit disbursement by financial institutions with a view to minimize the role of money lenders. The announcement made by the Government on 18.6.2004 on agriculture credit also envisaged relief to farmers indebted to money lenders. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Indian Banks' Association (IBA) have advised the banks that the indebtedness intended to be taken over from the non-institutional lenders may be included as part of the assessment of limits under Kisan Credit Card Scheme.

Cheating by Foreign Companies

503. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that certain foreign individuals and entities are making offers of huge money to Indian residents in the garb of helping individuals or schools and hospitals in their business development;

(b) if so, the details in regard thereto;

(c) whether the Reserve Bank of India has taken action against foreign entities, who are cheating people by promising huge sums of money through lotteries and financial assistance to Indian people;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether any measures have been taken to warn the people against operations of such foreign entities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) The acceptance and utilization of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality by certain persons or associations having a definite cultural, economic, educational, religious or social programme is regulated under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976, administered by Ministry of Home Affairs. The information

regarding receipt of foreign contribution by a voluntary association(s) can be accessed from MHA's website mha.nic.in.htm. The requirement under Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, administered by Ministry of Finance, is that the foreign money should be received by persons resident in India through authorized banking channels.

(c) to (e) In terms of Foreign Exchange Management (Current Account Transactions) Rules, 2000 dated 3rd May, 2000 drawal of foreign exchange for the following transactions is prohibited:

- Remittance out of lottery winnings.
- Remittance of income from racing/riding, etc., or any other hobby.
- Remittance for purchase of lottery tickets, banned/prescribed magazines, football pools, sweepstakes, etc.

To caution and educate the members of public in this regard, Reserve Bank of India have issued from time to time instructions as under, which can be accessed on RBI's website www.rbi.org.in:

i. A.P. (DIR Series) Circular No. 22 dated 7.12.2000
ii. A.P. (DIR Series) Circular No. 2 dated 27.7.2001
iii. A.P. (DIR Series) Circular No. 73 dated 24.1.2003

A press release 6/2004-2005 dated 11th August, 2004 entitled "RBI cautions public against huge fictitious offers from Non-Residents" was also issued by RBI wherein public at large were cautioned not to fall prey to such fictitious offers or become a victim of the foul play of such miscreants.

Retirement bottlenecks for NRIs in USA

504. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Indian professionals working in the USA are constrained to leave back a sizable quantum of their retirement benefits in that country while coming back to India;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) All citizens and foreign nationals employed in the USA, even temporarily, are required to pay social security tax amounting to 16.5% of their earnings. While this tax is applicable from the day of commencing work, in US, social security benefits are available only after completion of 10 years of work in the USA. Indian professionals, who travel to the US on an HIB visa, cannot avail the benefits of the contribution, as the maximum permissible tenure of stay under this scheme is 6 years.